



Hill 'n Vale



Newsletter of the Tomales and Two Rock Valley Presbyterian Churches
March /April 2018

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PASTORAL PONDERINGS

Dear Friends in Two Rock and Tomales,

What comes to mind when you hear the word “Lent”? Do you immediately associate it with “no meat on Fridays”? Do you wonder if you should give up chocolate during the forty days of Lent, or that extra cup of strong brew from one of our local coffee shops? Lent is of course the time of year when all followers of Jesus Christ are asked to be particularly mindful of how they live into their discipleship. But just how are we supposed to practice such mindful discipleship, and where do we turn for guidance?

Each Ash Wednesday, which always marks the beginning of Lent, portions of the sixth chapter Matthew’s Gospel are to be read, whether in church services or for personal devotion. This passage preserves the words of our Lord Jesus Christ about living the Jewish faith devoutly, humbly, and honestly by giving alms, praying, and fasting (Matthew 6:1-18). In our Christian faith tradition, these verses have come to describe the three main Lenten disciplines of giving alms, praying to God, and fasting for certain periods of time or from certain kinds of foods.

It may be surprising to some of us that there are actually three

spiritual disciplines associated with Lent. So we might ask one another at the beginning of this season not only “what are you giving up?” but also “what are you giving to help others?” and “are you spending time in prayer and worship?” And notice that what is foremost on Jesus’ list is not fasting but giving: giving alms, giving to charity, giving where there is a need.

As we go on our Lenten journey and spend extra time in reflection and prayer, share what we have with others, and fast from certain foods or from certain action, do we notice what happens in our hearts, minds, and souls? Does it make a difference in how we speak, what we do, how we feel? Over the course of the forty days of Lent, we may discover that our spirits are gently touched by our gracious God through our closer walk with our Lord. We may even find that, if we began practicing the Lenten disciplines because of the liturgical tradition of the church and because of a sense of religious obligation, we may end up doing them out of devotion to our God.

There is yet another way of looking at those traditional Lenten disciplines: Giving to others can also mean that more justice is done, that there is a little more fairness in our communities when we share what we have with others. Fasting can also be an act of solidarity that opens us to greater compassion with those who make do with little in life. And praying to God does

transform us, albeit slowly, into people who are more humble, more pious, more courageous to follow our Lord more nearly.

It is good to remember that Lent is not just about giving up a favorite food. Instead, may all of us give up anything that diminished the kind of life that God desires for all God’s creatures. At the same time, may we all take on tasks that will increase our worship of God and our service to our neighbors. Then we will experience greater justice, more kindness, and deeper faith and devotion, not just during Lent but into Easter and beyond.

Lenten blessings to all of you,
Pastor Cornelia



Spring Forth:
**Daylight Savings
Time**
Begins on
Sunday, March 11

THANK YOU’S

A big thank-you to our outgoing **church officers** who have served our congregations faithfully for the last three years

In Tomales, **Russell Sloan** completed a three-year term as a deacon, and **Shannan Hobbs** served three years as an elder and also as clerk-of-session.

In Two Rock, **Mary Lynn Visser** finished a three-year terms as a

deacon, and **Gillian Mahrt** completed a three-year term as an elder.

We are truly grateful to these elders and deacons for their service, their dedication, and their leadership of our congregations. Thank you, thank you.

NEW CHURCH OFFICERS

During our annual meetings in January and early February, and then again during a specially called congregational meeting in Tomales on February 25, the following people were elected as church officers:

In Tomales, **Kip Spragens** and **Virginia Campbell** are returning as deacons, while **Kathy Murphy** and **Carl Carter** were newly elected and ordained to the Board of Deacons. **David Burbank**, who had been on session previously, is coming back to serve as an elder, and **Virginia Campbell** is continuing as financial secretary.

In Two Rock, **Paul Lewis** was elected as a new elder to serve on session. **Maria Martens** has agreed to stay on as financial secretary.

A huge thank-you to all newly elected church officers for being willing to serve our congregations in leadership positions! May we all support them in their work, both with prayer and with active, hands-on help.

Thank you also to all church officers, new and returning, who came to the **annual officer retreat on February 10**. We had some helpful conversations about our faith, our ministry, and the core values of our churches' mission. And many thanks to

David Coe for bringing his guitar and leading us in inspiring and uplifting songs.

And: everyone is truly grateful for the work of the **nominating committees**, chaired by Lonnie Wernstrum in Two Rock and by Shannan Hobbs in Tomales. Their discernment process, prayers, and conversations have found dedicated leaders for our two churches. Many thanks to all committee members for making that possible.

JOYS TO SHARE

What great joy: at the session meeting on January 23, **Gary Foster** was received as a member of **Tomales Presbyterian Church**. He was welcomed by the congregation during worship on February 4 and celebrated during coffee hour with cake and hugs.

Gary is no stranger to Tomales Church. He has served as pianist, choir director, and music leader of the congregation since 2004, first playing piano while Victor Henigan played the organ, then leading the church's music from the piano after Victor retired. Gary has been a musician all his life: playing piano, singing while accompanying himself on the piano, singing in many choirs including the Sonoma Bach Choir, playing and singing for entertainment and enjoyment in many different settings. Gary is married to Tomales member and deacon Kathy Campbell Foster. The two live in northeast Santa Rosa, like attending music events, enjoy their children and grandchildren, and love taking trips to Yosemite in early fall. Everyone is delighted, Gary, that you have joined Tomales Presbyterian Church as a member. May God continue to bless your marvelous music ministry.

It is a great joy to announce that Kathy Murphy, our talented church secretary, has completely **re-designed our church websites**. The layout is much more user-friendly and you can now read the newsletter online. You can find the links at the top of this newsletter. Thank you very much Kathy.



Please join us
For Sunday Worship
In Tomales at 9:30 am
In Two Rock at 11:00 am

Kyle Craft, member of Two Rock Church and vibrant violinist, will offer a **free concert on Sunday, April 15, at 3:00 pm**. This special event will be held in the sanctuary of Two Rock Church and will feature violin music from 19th century Vienna: waltzes, polkas and popular songs by Johann Strauss, Franz Lehar, Robert Stolz, and others. During his 60 minute program, Kyle hopes to get us in the mood for springtime and dancing. Afterwards, there will be coffee and refreshments in the fellowship hall and the opportunity to speak with Kyle about his music and his studies.



Thank you immensely, Kyle for offering this concert to everyone in our churches and communities. What a special treat for springtime in Two Rock!

WORSHIP

Right after Candle Light Service in December, Tomales music leader **Gary Foster offered a special Christmas present to the Two Rock congregation: a better grand piano for the sanctuary!**

It turns out that Gary owned a Baby Grand, made by Baldwin in the 1940s, recently overhauled with a new set of hammers and all new strings; and he was willing to donate that to Two Rock! Yet with Christmas and New Years coming, with annual reports and annual meetings, it took until the first of February for Gary's instrument to be brought to Two Rock. After it arrived, the piano did need some work on one of the legs and on the pedals, but those were fairly simple repairs. The great joy lies in the sound of this instrument: it is full, warm, vibrant, strong, and oh-so-melodious. On February 10, the first Sunday when Margaret Todt played it during worship, there was spontaneous applause by the entire congregation: the sound was so beautiful!

Thank you immensely, Gary; you have given a real treasure to Two Rock Church, one that will greatly enhance our worship. We will enjoy and cherish this instrument for years to come!

Please note our worship event for this Lenten Season:

Lent always begins on Ash Wednesday, which fell on February 14 this year.

The forty days of Lent include five regular Sundays, followed by **Palm-and-Passion Sunday on March 25**, which marks the start of Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday is on March 29; that evening at 7:00 pm, we will hold a special service in the Fireside Room in Two Rock.

Easter is on Sunday, April 1. We will celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ with a joint **Sunrise Service in Two Rock at 6:30 am**, followed by a joyful, bountiful breakfast for everyone. We will also **worship at our regular times**: in Tomales at 9:30 am and in Two Rock at 11:00 am.

The **joint hand bells choir** is busy practicing again! Under the direction of Kay Fish, bell ringers from both churches get together for rehearsals in Two Rock at 12:30 pm on Sundays. Carl Carter, Liz Mitchell, Kathy Murphy, and Kip and Mary Spragens come from Tomales; from Two Rock we have Sue and Brent Russell, Pat Huber, and David Coe, plus Kyle Craft on the violin.

The hand bell choir will ring during worship **in Tomales on March 4, and in Two Rock on March 11**. Be sure to join us to hear the hand bells during these two services.

And as reminders for everyone:

Communion is served on the first Sunday of each month, and **birthdays** are celebrated on each third Sunday.

The **choir in Tomales** meets on Sundays at 9:00 am for practice, the **choir in Two Rock** rehearses at 9:30 am. Come and add your voice!

EDUCATION & LEARNING

☺ For this year's **Adult Lenten Study**, we are reading and discussing "*Lord, Teach Us. The Lords' Prayer and the Christians Life*", by William H. Williman and Stanley Hauerwas. Members and

friends from both churches get together in Two Rock on six Wednesday evenings for a soup supper, followed by a time of study and discussion. We will meet **through March 21**; you may still join the group and receive a study booklet.

☺ All children and youth of our congregations are specially invited to be in church on **March 25, which is Palm Sunday**. As we begin worship, we would like our young people, and all who are young at heart, to lead us in a joyful procession in commemoration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. The children will wave palm fronds while the congregations sings "*All Glory, Laud, and Honor*". Please join us.

☺ **Earth Day is on April 22** and



falls on a Sunday this year. Be sure to bring your children and grandchildren to church that day, so that we may talk with them about being good stewards of God's creation and join together in singing "*inch-by-inch, row-by-row, gonna make this garden grow...*" We will also have a plant for each student to take home and care for.

MISSION & OUTREACH

Great news: The **Super Bowl Fundraiser**, which the Two Rock Sunday School held on Super Bowl Sunday, **netted \$ 330!** Many thanks, parents and Sunday school teachers, for making hearty, healthy soups; many thanks, Sunday school

students, for setting up plates and spoons, cups and napkins and ladling out soup; many thanks, Two Rock congregation, for supporting this annual fundraiser so generously. The entire sum of money that was raised will be donated to a local food program. Our students and their teachers are looking at the various food pantries in Petaluma and will decide soon where to make their donation.

Thank you all for sharing time, talents, and treasures, so that others can have at least a bowl of warm soup on a cold winter evening.

Two Rock member and quilting enthusiast **Mary Jo Jacobs** arranged to have five baby blankets sent to the **Shriner Hospital in Sacramento**. All of these blankets were created by the Two Rock Quilting Group. They were donated so that small children would have their own special blanket when they come out of surgery and begin their recovery. Thanks, quilting ladies, you for this gift of warmth and cheerful colors, of encouragement and hope!

March 31 is Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. For some years now, Tomales Presbyterian Church has hosted an **Easter Egg Hunt** on that day at **Tomales Town Park**. We are continuing this tradition, and adults from Tomales and Two Rock churches are planning to stuff hundreds of colorful plastic eggs and hide them on that last day in March. Please bring your children and grand-children to the town park that afternoon, and have them bring a basket or bag to collect their eggs. **The hunt begins**

promptly at 1:30 pm. All children and their families from Tomales, Two Rock, and beyond are invited to this event.

The Two Rock congregation will once again host the **Coast Guard Spouses Association** in their annual Open Trunk Flea Market. Please come to the church parking lot on **Saturday, May 5 from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm** — there will be treasures for everyone. Look for children's clothes and toys, furniture, things for the kitchen, sport equipment, knick-knacks, books, and one-of-a-kind items. You will love the selection and the prices, and you will help lighten the load of Coast Guard families as they pack up and move to new assignments across the nation. The Coast Guard Spouses will also have bottled water for sale, plus some baked goods.

Please begin to collect items for the annual **Farm-and-Flea Market in Tomales**. For 2018, this event has been moved to an earlier time of year: it will be held on **Sunday, May 6th**, along First Street and John Street and towards the entrance to Tomales Elementary School.

Tomales Presbyterian Church will have a double booth at this event. On one side, we will sell all the gift items, dishes, kitchen stuff, children's toys, decorative items, and other treasures that people donate to the church. On the other side, we will sell food: coffee and donuts for breakfast; hot dogs, chili, and lemonade for lunch.

Please mark your calendar for this special event, and make time to support Tomales Church in this important fundraiser.

Do mark your calendars: **Sunday, May 13**, will be Mother's Day and

time for our annual **Abelskiver Breakfast and joint Fundraiser**. Please help with organizing this event or plan to bring the special women in your life and all your family to this marvelous Mother's Day breakfast.

PROPERTY & FINANCE

The beautiful, old, **stained-glass window of Tomales Church** are an ongoing challenge during the winter months: we are never quite able to find and stop all those slow leaks that happen during heavy winter storms. The good news is: Tomales elder and engineer **Kip Spragens** has taken on the challenge, and it has made a big difference! In early January, Kip directed a group of men in the installation of two storm windows that he had designed. Since then he has done some design modifications, so that the storm windows fit better. Thank you very much, Kip, for keeping at it! Thank you also to Rob Campbell, Eric Knudsen, Carl Carter, and Gary Foster for lending a hand to get those storm windows in place.

During the last week of January, and into the first couple of days of February, amazing things were happening at **Two Rock Church**, thanks to **Paul Lewis' vision and initiative**.

After months of planning, of discussion with session members, consultation with Two Rock member and architect Brent Russell, and conversations among members and friends of the church, it was time to roll out the big equipment to **make our church building more accessible for everyone**.

Here is what happened: Paul Lewis and his crew of three men graded

and smoothed out the area immediately behind the church, where many people park their cars, so that they may step into the building from level ground. After doing the grading, Paul's crew poured a concrete walkway that goes from the kitchen door in back to the corner of the building, then alongside the church offices, to connect with the path that leads to the offices and the front door. Bright blue hand rails are attached to the walkway, to provide support for anyone who needs it. And there are no steps; rather, there is a gentle slope in some areas, so that all outside doors can be reached level-footed.

The way this new walkway is constructed, people are able to pull into the parking spots in back or along the north side of the building, step onto the concrete pathway, and then easily enter the church through the door by the kitchen, through the door into the alcove, or through the door by the offices.



A huge thank-you goes to Paul Lewis and also to Freddie

Dolcini, Peter Koroitamana, and Ben Visser, Paul's dedicated and talented work crew. What a fantastic job you did! Everyone is immensely grateful for the new walkway, for the handrails, and for how easy it is now to access the church building in Two Rock.

There will be a **workday in Two Rock on Saturday, March 24, from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm.** The plan is get our church looking its

best for Palm Sunday and Easter. We want to do some work inside and around the building: extra cleaning, washing windows, sorting storage areas, putting flowers in the planters by the patio. For more information and to sign up, please contact Lonnie Wernstrum at 707-480-1110.

PRESBYTERY NEWS

† This is the time of year when our churches send their *per capita contributions* to the Presbytery Office. This money helps support the work of our Presbytery of the Redwoods, of our Synod of the Pacific, and of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). For 2018, we are asked to make the following donations to

General Assembly	\$ 7.73
Synod of the Pacific	\$ 5.22
Presbytery General	\$ 12.26
Presbytery Building	\$ 5.00

Soon our church treasurer will send to Presbytery a total of **\$30.21 for each active member.** Please consider making a donation for this amount to your church, in addition to your regular contribution. Thank you very much.

CHURCH CARE & FELLOWSHIP

Thank you to all deacons in both congregations, and to all members and friends who make our fellowship time after worship so special. We love the cookies you bake, the eggs dishes you bring, the sandwiches, fruit, and nuts; all of it makes for happy snacking while we sip our coffee and talk with our friends after worship.

As Easter approaches and we prepare to host people from our churches and the wider community,

please volunteer to help set up and to bring refreshments for **Easter Sunday.** It will make things easier for our hard-working deacons, and it will make our fellowship time even more enjoyable. Thank you!

SMALL GROUPS AT CHURCH

Good news for all quilters: the **Two Rock Quilting Group** has resumed its work. They will be busy between now and Harvest Festival in September as they design and create beautiful, colorful, warm quilts in all different shapes and sizes. Feel free to join this lively and friendly group; they are always happy for an extra pair of hands! For more information, please contact Judy Burton at 707-762-4966.

The **Creative Crafts Group** continues to meet in Two Rock every Tuesday from 10:00 am until noon; and the **Presbyterian Women of Two Rock** gather for devotions, mission planning, and a potluck lunch on the second Tuesday of every month from 10:00 am until about 1:00 pm. For more information, please contact Lea Ray Schultz at 707-763-0297.

COMMUNITY NEWS

The **Tomales Food Pantry** is open every Thursday from 2:00 pm until about 2:45 pm. Just come to the Town Hall: there are plenty of fruits and vegetables, plus some packed and canned food and protein items, for all who need them.

Would anyone like to have the **baby grand piano** that had been in the sanctuary at Two Rock Church for the last ten years? If interested, or for more information, please contact Mel Todt at 707-763-4284.

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“Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim.”

Holy Week and Easter Schedule:

March 25: Palm /Passion Sunday, with Children’s Procession during worship

March 29: Maundy Thursday Service in Two Rock at 7:00 pm

March 31: Easter Egg Hunt in Tomales at 1:30 pm

April 1: Easter Sunday!

Sunrise Service in Two Rock at 6:30 am followed by breakfast

Regular Easter Service in Tomales at 9:30 am, in Two Rock at 11:00

